

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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P 011204Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8150

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 9078

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, SP, PO

SUBJECT: VISIT OF SPANISH PRIME MINISTER TO PORTUGAL

REF: LISBON 8229

1. THE SPANISH PRESS ALSO GAVE CONSIDERABLE COVERAGE TO THE SUAREZ-SOARES VISIT, WITH EMPHASIS ON THE SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS SINCE THE BURNING OF THE SPANISH EMBASSY AND CONSULATE IN PORTUGAL LAST YEAR AND ON THE BILATERAL AND INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE OF THAT IMPROVEMENT.

2. BEFORE THE VISIT, FOREIGN MINISTRY UNDERSECRETARY SOLANO TOLD THE DCM THAT THE PRINCIPAL REASON FOR MAKING THE TRIP AT THIS TIME WAS FOR SUAREZ TO MEET WITH A SOCIALIST LEADER BEFORE THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL MEETING IN GENEVA. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES WERE OBVIOUSLY IMPORTANT TO EACH OTHER AND HAD LIKE FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES, AND THAT SPAIN NEEDED TO BUILD UP PORTUGUESE SELF-CONFIDENCE IN ITS RELATIONS WITH ITS LARGER NEIGHBOR. AFTER THE TRIP, MFA OFFICIALS SPOKE IN POSITIVE AND EVEN GLOWING TERMS ABOUT THE GENERAL GOOD RESULTS. (WE NOTE THAT IN ANY CASE, SPAIN APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SPARED AT THE SI MEETING.) OREJA'S AIDE, JAVIER RUPEREZ, TOLD EMBOFF THAT THE VISIT HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL,  
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THAT THE TWO PRIME MINISTERS HAD GOTTEN ALONG WELL,

AND THAT THE SPANISH SIDE HAD AT THE SAME TIME BEEN STRUCK WITH THE NEED TO PAY MORE ATTENTION TO PORTUGAL, AT LEAST PARTLY WITH A VIEW TO EASING CONTINUING PORTUGUESE SUSPICIONS. RUPEREZ ALSO COMMENTED THAT THE IBERIAN PACT WAS NOT AN ISSUE, BEING NOTHING MORE THAN A STANDARD NON-AGGRESSION PACT.

3. IN A MEETING WITH ANOTHER EMBOFF, DEL PINO, CURRENTLY ACTING DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR EUROPEAN AND ATLANTIC AFFAIRS, SPOKE ENTHUSIASTICALLY AND AT LENGTH ABOUT HOW WELL THE VISIT HAD GONE, EMPHASIZING THAT THE TWO LEADERS, DESPITE THEIR VERY DIFFERENT PERSONAL POLITICAL HISTORIES, HAD ACHIEVED AN IMPRESSIVE DEGREE OF COMMUNICATION, MEETING ALONE FOR OVER TWO HOURS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE VISIT AND EMERGING WREATHED IN SMILES. DEL PINO ALSO REFERRED TO LONG-STANDING PORTUGUESE CONCERNS ABOUT SPANISH INTENTIONS, CALLING THEM GROUNDLESS BUT NOTING THAT HENCEFORTH THERE WOULD BE A DETERMINED EFFORT TO ACHIEVE BETTER MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE TWO PEOPLES.

4. DEL PINO THOUGHT THE VISIT HAD IN SUM BROUGHT BENEFITS ON THREE PLANES: THE INTERNAL (ON EACH SIDE), WITH BOTH MEN STRENGTHENED VIS-A-VIS THEIR RESPECTIVE DOMESTIC POLITICAL OPPOSITIONS; THE BILATERAL, WITH BOTH COUNTRIES STANDING TO GAIN FROM IMPROVED RELATIONS; AND THE INTERNATIONAL, WHERE A MORE COHESIVE IBERIA COULD PLAY A MORE HELPFUL ROLE.

5. REGARDING THE TWO COUNTRIES AND NATO, DEL PINO POINTED OUT--ACCURATELY--THAT THE GOS HAS NO POSITION ON POSSIBLE SPANISH ENTRY INTO NATO. THE IMPLICATION, THAT THE SPANISH SIDE WAS THEREFORE IN NO POSITION TO REQUEST PORTUGUESE SUPPORT NOW FOR SUCH ENTRY, PROVIDES INTERESTING CONTRAST WITH THE INFORMATION IN REFTEL INDICATING THAT SUCH SUPPORT WAS REQUESTED. STABLER

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